

Voluntary Report - public distribution

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## Mexico

### Dairy and Products

#### Mexico Publishes Proposed Rule on Health Specifications and Testing Methods for Select Cheese Products

**2003**

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**Report Highlights:**

On August 19, 2003, Mexico's Secretariat of Health published a proposed regulation that will affect select cheese products, including those that are unmatured, fresh, matured and processed, and other products made with similar ingredients and procedures. The proposed regulation establishes health specifications and testing methods for these products. Comments on the proposed rule may be submitted through October 17, 2003.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Mexico [MX1]  
[MX]

**Introduction:** This report summarizes a proposed rule Mexico's Secretariat of Health (SSA) published in the "*Diario Oficial*" (Federal Register) on August 19, 2003.

**Disclaimer:** This summary is based on a *cursory* review of the subject announcement and therefore should not, under any circumstances, be viewed as a definitive reading of the regulation in question, or of its implications for U.S. agricultural export trade interests. In the event of a discrepancy or discrepancies between this summary and the complete regulation or announcement as published in Spanish, the latter shall prevail.

**FAS/Mexico's Executive Summary:** SSA published the proposed rule PROY-NOM-212-SSA12002 that establishes the health specifications and testing methods for cheeses that are unmaturred, fresh, matured and processed, and products made with similar ingredients and procedures. Compliance is mandatory for all persons or entities involved in processing or importing these products.

**Title:** PROY-NOM-212-SSA1-2002. Products and services. Cheeses: Unmaturred or fresh, matured and processed, and the products elaborated with ingredients and procedures of a similar aspect. Sanitary specifications. Testing methods.

**Type of Regulation:** Proposed

**Important Dates**

- 1. Publication Date:** August 19, 2003.
- 2. Start of Public Comment Period:** August 20, 2003
- 3. End of Public Comment Period:** October 18, 2003

NOTE: The comments to this norm must be submitted in writing and in Spanish to: Comité Consultivo Nacional de Normalización De Regulación y Fomento Sanitario  
Monterrey No. 33  
Col. Roma  
c.P. 06700, Mexico, D.F.  
Email: [rfs@salud.gob.mx](mailto:rfs@salud.gob.mx)

**Products Affected:**

The products covered by this proposed NOM are listed as:

Cheeses: Unmaturred or fresh, matured and processed, and the products made with Ingredients and procedures of a similar aspect.

**Important Features of the Regulation:**

Other Mexican Official Norms that will be used to enforce this proposed NOM:

NOM-031-ZOO-1995 National campaign against bovine tuberculosis (*Mycobacterium bovis*).

NOM-031-SSA1-1993 Goods and services. Products of fishing. Bivalve molluscs, fresh, refrigerated and frozen. Sanitary specifications.

NOM-033-SSA1-1993 Goods and services. Irradiation of food products. Permitted dosage in foods, raw material and food additives.

NOM-041-ZOO-1995 National campaign against brucellosis in animals.

NOM-086-SSA1-1994 Goods and services. Food and non-alcoholic beverages with modifications in their composition. Health specifications.

NOM-088-SSA1-1994 Goods and services. Contamination by radionuclids. In imported food products for massive consumption. Maximum allowable limits.

NOM-092-SSA1-1994 Determination method to count the aerobic bacteria by plate.

NOM-110-SSA1-1994 Goods and services. Preparation and dilution of food samples for their microbiological analysis.

NOM-112-SSA1-1994 Determination of bacteria coliforms. Technique of the most probable number.

NOM-114-SSA1-1994 Determination method of Salmonella in meals.

NOM-117-SSA1-1994 Goods and services. Testing method for determination of Cadmium, Arsenic, Lead, Tin, Copper, Iron, Zinc and Mercury in foods, potable water and Purified Water by Atomic Absorption Spectrometry.

NOM-120-SSA1-1994 Sanitation and hygiene practices for meals, non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages process.

NOM-127-SSA1-1994 Ambient health, water for use and human consumption. Permissible limit of quality and treatment to which water must be submitted for potabilization.

NOM-129-SSA-1995 Goods and services. Fishing products: dried-salted, smoked, cephalopod and gastropod molluscs, fresh-refrigerated and frozen. Conditions and sanitary specifications.

NOM-143-SSA-1995 Goods and services. Microbiological testing method for food products. Determination of *listeria monocytogenes*.

NOM-145-SSA-1995 Goods and services. Meat products cut and cured. Meat products cured and matured. Conditions and sanitary specifications.

NOM-184-SSA1-2002 Goods and services. Milk, lactic formula and lactic product combined. Sanitary specifications.

NOM-185-SSA1-2002 Goods and services. Butter, cream, acidified and fermented lactic products, milk based candies. Sanitary specifications.

### Health Provisions:

The domestic and imported products under this proposed NOM must comply with the described specifications in the referenced NOMs listed above, and also, must comply with the described specifications on: Microbiological specifications, additives, and heavy metals contamination.

This NOM also establishes that foreign matter is not permitted and is defined as: All material, residues, organic or inorganic waste or debris that is present in the product by contamination

and/or non-hygienic handling of the product during its process. Feces, hair of any species, pieces or fragments of bone and insects that are dangerous to public health are considered as foreign matter.

#### Microbiological specifications:

Milk employed as raw material in the elaboration of the products subject of this norm, that has not been submitted to pasteurization or an equivalent thermic process, must comply with the following:

**Table I**

Specification	Maximum Limit
Aureus mesophylics	100,000 CFU/ml
Enterotoxins staphylococcus	Negative
<i>E. coli</i>	100 CFU/ml

The products subject to this norm should not exceed the following limits:

**Table II**

Specification	Maximum Limit
Enterotoxins staphylococcus	Negative
<i>Salmonella spp 25g</i>	Absent
<i>Listeria Monocytogenes in 25g</i>	Absent
<i>E. coli 2</i>	< 3NMP/g
<i>E. coli 3</i>	100 CFU/q
Botulism toxins 1 4	Negative
<i>Vibrio cholerae</i>	Absent

#### Heavy Metals and Metaloids:

**Table III**

Specifications	Maximum Limit (mg/kg)
Arsenic (As)	0,2
Lead (Pb)	0,5
Tin (SN)*	100

\*Only for those packed in tins without varnish

#### Additives:

**Table IV**

#### Maximum Limits for the Product Subject of this Standard (mg/kg)

Additive	Maximum Limit	Product
Acetic acid glacial	GMP	Unmatured or fresh, acidified. Processed
Alginic acid	GMP	Unmatured or fresh.
Citric acid	GMP	Unmatured or fresh acidified. Processed
Phosphoric acid	9 g/kg total compounds of added phosphorous, calculated as phosphorous	Unmatured or fresh. Processed

Lactic acid	GMP	Unmatured or fresh acidified. Processed. In brine.
Propionic acid	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Sorbic acid	1,000 mg/kg Alone or combined, Expressed as sorbic acid	Unmatured or fresh. (for slicing, cuts grated and shredded)
Agar	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Ammonium alginate	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Calcium alginate	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Potassium alginate	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Propylene glycol alginate	5 g/kg 8g/kg alone or combined	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Sodium alginate	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Beta-apo-8' carotenes	35 mg/kg	Matured. Processed.
Beta synthetic carotenes	25 mg/kg 600 mg/kg alone or Combined	Matured. Processed.
Calcium carbonate	GMP	Unmatured or fresh.
Carboxymethylcellulose	GMP 8g/kg alone or combined	Unmatured or fresh. Processed. Matured. Grated and powdered.
Carragenines	GMP 8 g/kg alone or combined	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Bees wax	GMP	Cheese coverings
Candelilla wax	GMP	Cheese coverings
Carnauba wax	GMP	Cheese coverings
Rice husk wax	GMP	Cheese coverings
Microcrystalline wax	GMP	Cheese coverings
Tripotassium citrate	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Trisodium citrate	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Calcium chloride	GMP	All cheeses
Titanium dioxide	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Annato extract	10mg/kg 25mg/kg 50mg/kg 60mg/kg 600mg/kg	Matured cheese of normal coloration. Matured cheese of orange coloration. Matured cheese of intense orange color. Totally matured cheese including crust. Processed cheese

	Reported on basis of bixinejnorbixine	
Dehydrogenated calcium phosphate	3.5 g/kg alone or combined, calculated as phosphorous pentoxide	Cheese unmatured or fresh. Processed
Dehydrated sodium phosphate	3.5 g/kg alone or combined, calculated as phosphorous pentoxide	Cheese unmatured or fresh. Processed
Dibasic sodium phosphate	3.5 g/kg alone or combined, calculated as phosphorous pentoxide	Cheese unmatured or fresh. Processed
Tricalcic phosphate	3.5 g/kg alone or combined, calculated as phosphorous pentoxide	Cheese unmatured or fresh. Processed
Trisodic phosphate	3.5 g/kg alone or combined, calculated as phosphorous pentoxide	Cheese unmatured or fresh. Processed
Gelatin	GMP	Processed
Glucone-delta-lactone	GMP	Unmatured or fresh, or in brine
Arabic gum	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Carob gum	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Guar gum	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Karaya gum	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Xanthan gum	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Lecithin	5 g/kg alone or combined	Processed cheese.
Mono and diglycerides	2g/kg of fat	Products elaborated with ingredients or similar aspect.
Nisine	12.5 mg/kg (maximum level in finished product)	All products.
Potassium nitrate	50mg/kg	Matured pressed hard cheese
Sodium nitrate	50mg/kg	Matured pressed hard cheese
Paprika oleoresin	GMP	All products.
Pectins <sup>1</sup>	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. Processed
Pepsin derived from ruminant stomachs and porcines	GMP	To curdle milk
Pimaracine	20mg/kg only for treatment of superficial area or	Matured cheese. Absent at a depth of 5 mm.
Calcium proprianate	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. (for slicing, cuts grated or shredded). Processed.
Potassium proprianate	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. (for slicing, cuts grated or shredded). Processed.

Sodium propionate	GMP	Unmatured or fresh. (for slicing, cuts grated or shredded). Processed.
Quimosine A derived from <i>E. coli</i> K12, containing proquimosme B gene of calves	GMP	To curdle milk
Quimosine B derived from <i>Kluyveromyces lactis</i> , containing proquimosine B gene of calves	GMP	To curdle milk
Riboflavin	GMP	All products.
Renine, derived from <i>Bacillus cereus</i>	GMP	To curdle milk.
Potassium sorbate	1,000 mg/kg alone or combined, expressed as sorbic acid	Unmatured or fresh. (for slicing, cuts grated or shredded).
Sodium sorbate	1,000 mg/kg alone or combined, expressed as sorbic acid	Unmatured or fresh. (for slicing, cuts grated or shredded), Processed.

GMP = Good manufacturing practices

### Sampling:

Sampling of products must be performed in accordance with the regulations specified in this proposed NOM and the applicable referenced NOMs.

### Test Method:

Testing of products must be performed in accordance with the regulations specified in this proposed NOM and the applicable referenced NOMs.

Verification of physical and chemical specifications under this law must be done according to Norms, as specified in the references.

### Labeling:

In addition to the provisions of the specific NOM for labeling, NOM-051-SCFI-1994, processed cheese products under this proposed NOM must also use the regulations specified in the applicable referenced NOMs.

### Packing and Wrapping:

Container: Products under this NOM will be packed in sanitary containers made of innocuous materials resistant to change during processing, so that products do not react or change their chemical, physical or organoleptic characteristics.

Packaging: Resistant materials will be used to offer adequate protection for containers and prevent external damage, while providing ease in handling, storage and distribution.

**Possible areas of concern:**

Public health inspectors will also take samples of cheese products under this NOM at warehouses and sales points to monitor the compliance of the product with the specifications of this NOM. Any positive laboratory results from samples taken at the border or at the warehouse/sales points will initiate an investigation to determinate the origin and/or cause of the deficiency/problem. If the investigation result indicates the problem was due to plant deficiencies, sanctions will be implemented ranging from the administrative type to cancellation of import permits for the producing plant.

This proposed NOM is partially equivalent to other international rules such as CXFH 9706 July 1997. Pre-project of code of higienic practice in the manufacture of cheeses uncured nor matured and soft matured cheese. Furthermore, this proposed NOM is not equivalent to other Mexican standards.

**For More Information:** *AgMexico@usda.gov*

*Fax: 011-52-55-5080-2776*

**Internet Connections**

*FAS Mexico Web Site:* We are available at <http://www.fas-la.com/mexico> or visit our headquarter home page at <http://www.fas.usda.gov> for a complete selection of FAS' worldwide agricultural reporting.

**Useful Mexican Web Sites:** Mexico's equivalent of the Department of Agriculture (SAGARPA) can be found at [www.sagarpa.gob.mx](http://www.sagarpa.gob.mx) and Mexico's equivalent of the Department of Commerce (SE) can be found at [www.se.gob.mx](http://www.se.gob.mx) These web sites are mentioned for the readers' convenience but USDA does NOT in any way endorse, guarantee the accuracy of, or necessarily concur with the information contained on the mentioned sites.